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Commission on Human Rights
Sixtieth session
15 March-23 April 2004
Item 12 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective: violence against women

Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the elimination of violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General***

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights the report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995.

* E/CN.6/2004/1.
** E/CN.4/2004/1.
*** The collection and synthesis of up-to-date information from all regions delayed the submission of the present document.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 50/166, the General Assembly gave the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) the mandate to strengthen its activities to eliminate violence against women in order to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. In doing so, UNIFEM works closely with the relevant agencies and bodies of the United Nations as part of its system-wide efforts to eliminate violence against women. Under the guidance of resolution 50/166, the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women was established in 1996 and became operational in 1997. Since that time, it has continued to identify and support innovative and catalytic projects around the world that aim to break new ground, create new models and mobilize new constituencies in the growing movement to eliminate gender-based violence in all of its manifestations.

2. The present report to the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights documents the activities undertaken by UNIFEM in 2003 to eliminate violence against women.

II. Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

3. Through the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, UNIFEM links innovative efforts to end violence against women with opportunities to replicate and scale up successful strategies. The Trust Fund generates lessons and good practices that inform larger programmes of UNIFEM and its civil society, governmental and United Nations partners at the national, regional and global levels.

4. Since the Trust Fund began operation, it has awarded $8.4 million in grants to 155 initiatives in more than 70 countries. Over the past several years, the Trust Fund has experienced a dramatic increase in grant applications, which can be accounted for in part by its greater visibility and growing community of grantees. But the increased demand also clearly points to the Trust Fund's unique character as a funding mechanism in a global context in which gender-based violence continues to be a chronic threat to women's lives and well-being, as well as to the dynamism of the constituency that is responding with national-level initiatives to the recommendations of the Beijing Platform of Action and its five-year review.

5. In November 2003 the eighth grant-making cycle of the Trust Fund provided slightly over $600,000 to eight initiatives covering 16 countries. As in previous years, requests for support from the Trust Fund vastly exceeded available resources and in the eighth grant-making cycle the Trust Fund solicited proposals to scale up and expand activities of previously supported Trust Fund projects. Proposals were submitted for final review to the Inter-Agency Project Appraisal Committee, which included the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Division for the Advancement of Women and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The initiatives that will be undertaken through proposals approved in the Trust Fund's eighth cycle include:

(a) The members of the Laos Women's Union (LWU) will be trained to facilitate and support the drafting and dissemination of anti-violence legislation, the extension of services to survivors of violence and the establishment of shelters. This project builds upon a previous Trust Fund initiative which had trained selected LWU members to expand the availability of counselling services to survivors of violence and in a rights-based approach to service provision. Support from the project also enabled LWU to leverage funding to build the first shelter for survivors of violence to be established in Laos;

(b) A programme on the prevention of dating violence will be implemented within Croatian high school curriculums to promote a zero-tolerance environment. High school teachers and psychologists from around the country, including the war-affected areas, will be trained as trainers. The zero-tolerance initiative builds on the experience gained in a Trust Fund-financed awareness-raising campaign previously conducted in Croatia. The campaign resulted in increased numbers of adult men and women who recognized the forms of gender-based violence and were aware of preventive measures. At the same time, evaluations revealed a pressing need to target youth so as to address the cultural taboo against open discussion of gender-based violence among teenagers that limited the impact of the initial awareness-raising campaign;

(c) In Botswana, South Africa and Zambia, judges will be trained to apply international and regional human rights standards and principles to cases involving gender-based violence and gender discrimination. This will expand the reach of the Trust Fund-supported Jurisprudence for Equality programme that trained more than 400 female and male judges in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe to apply international and regional human rights standards and principles actively to cases involving gender-based violence and gender discrimination. The success of the programme also led to the adaptation of the curriculum of the programme at judicial training institutes, received support from the highest levels of the judiciary and Government in those countries and led to the collection of data on case decisions arising out of the training for use by judges throughout the world;

(d) In Mexico, a common agenda and strategic action plan will be developed across civil society organizations to stimulate intensified action to end impunity for crimes committed against women in Ciudad Juarez. The initiative seeks to ensure strategic and sustained action to follow the results achieved through the Trust Fund-supported campaign "Stop the Impunity: No More Killings", which involved more than 300 organizations from Mexico and abroad, and through the recent mission to Ciudad Juarez of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur for Women's Rights. Among the results achieved were heightened awareness and visibility of the femicide crimes and of the need to bring the perpetrators to justice.

6. Reports submitted by Trust Fund grantees from previous cycles continue to demonstrate that the catalytic support received from it yields concrete results. In Bulgaria, following an initiative to strengthen partnerships between a wide range of State institutions and civil society organizations, a National Forum on Domestic Violence and an informal association of representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, National Police, Ministry of Justice, lawyers and NGOs have been created. The Forum is currently working jointly to lobby for the adoption of a draft law on domestic violence, for legislative changes to the Penal Code and for the creation of a national action plan on domestic violence. Moreover, there is continuing recognition for the achievements of Trust Fund-supported projects. In 2003 the Global

Knowledge Partnership's Gender and Information and Communication Technology award was conferred on a project supported by the Trust Fund that documented the experiences of women in situations of armed conflict in Uganda, in the category of Outstanding Multistakeholder Initiative. The documentary film was used to raise public awareness of the atrocities committed against women during the armed conflict in Uganda from 1980 to 1997 and to stimulate government support for victims of rape, assault and sexual slavery.

7. The Trust Fund's strategy has been replicated at the regional level in the Commonwealth of Independent States in order to build capacity of governmental and non-governmental women's organizations and networks to coordinate their efforts to address violence against women. In 2002 consultations with those partners in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan designed processes for capacity-building grants and prioritized urgent areas of action. In 2003 the regional Project Appraisal Committee, composed of representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Population Fund, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Open Society Institute, the German Embassy and NGOs, approved the funding of 15 projects focusing on the priority areas of action. In addition, the Trust Fund provided workshops and training in those areas and facilitated regional cooperation and networking between NGO and government partners regarding emerging issues connected to the work of the grantees. In Kazakhstan, for example, a round-table consultation was held regarding the draft law on domestic violence, which produced recommendations to the Government and the National Commission on Women's Affairs for improvements that would bring the law into conformity with international standards regarding violence against women.

8. Finally, to showcase the work of Trust Fund grantees and to highlight the need for national Governments and the international community to renew and intensify their commitment and resources to eliminate gender-based violence, UNIFEM has institutionalized a special event to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence. For the second year, the event "Not a Minute More" was held in New York on 24 November, providing an opportunity for Trust Fund grantees to share their strategies for working to end violence in their communities and to underline the critical role of global partnerships between Governments, the United Nations system, women's networks, civil society and the private sector in addressing the issue.

III. Scaling up strategies to end violence against women

9. Building on lessons learned from projects supported through the Trust Fund, UNIFEM addressed the issue of violence against women in 2003 by supporting larger programmes with primary focuses on advocacy and awareness-raising, legislative reform, training of officials involved in the administration of justice, men's participation in combating violence against women and the coordination of efforts to end violence.

10. Work is ongoing to support the formulation and ensure the effective implementation of laws and policies to eliminate violence against women. Following a research and advocacy campaign supported by UNIFEM and its partners, new measures to combat gender-based violence were introduced into the Moroccan Penal Code and Labour Law, regarding matters such as forced

prostitution, sexual harassment, honour killings, domestic violence and rape. In East and South-East Asia, UNIFEM provided technical assistance and support for the development of domestic violence legislation in five countries. A review of the domestic violence laws and policies of nine countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States was presented at a regional conference and has been developed into a resource tool that is being utilized by a range of stakeholders in the region. UNIFEM support has also focused on the training of officials involved in the administration of justice so as to ensure that legislation is being effectively and properly implemented. In Uganda, skills training on human rights and the handling of violence cases was conducted for the Ugandan police staff of the Child and Family Protection Unit. The processing of complaints regarding the sexual exploitation of girls and adolescents is being monitored within the Brazilian Ministry of Justice. In Ecuador, support was provided for police academy curriculum reform and for the publication of a new police procedures manual that will put into practice gender and rights-sensitive approaches to the enforcement of anti-violence laws.

11. Strategies continue to build awareness among policy makers and the public about the urgency of this pandemic. A regional advocacy campaign in the Commonwealth of Independent States, entitled "A life free of violence — it is our right", was completed in 2003, with evaluations demonstrating that it reached several million people in nine countries. The use of both traditional and non-traditional means of communication (including mobile theatre and graffiti and art competitions for children) generated a high level of interest and involvement. Data collection at the close of the project indicated increases from 14 to 24 per cent in public awareness in different locations across Russia. The creation of a database containing, for the first time, comparable data for all nine countries enabled UNIFEM to make specific recommendations for conducting activities in each country in the context of the campaign. In Afghanistan, UNIFEM and the Ministry of Women's Affairs hosted a landmark event in Kabul in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. At the event, President Karzai made the first public declaration against violence against women that has been made in Afghanistan.

12. In several regions, concentrated attention is being paid to the roles that men can play in combating violence against women and to the social construction of masculinity. In India, UNIFEM has partnered with Zonta International and the University of Delhi in research and analysis relating to men and masculinities. The body of knowledge that has been generated has supported a new course, "Theorizing Masculinities", at the University of Delhi, which has also been linked with the universities of Edinburgh, Derby and Sussex and the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London). Also through this partnership, a photographic exhibition entitled "Men and Masculinities: from Violence to Supportive Practices", has been published and interest in hosting the exhibit has been expressed by museums in New York and other cities. In the Caribbean, UNIFEM support for research into the root cause of gender-based violence has produced the report entitled "Domestic Violence in Barbados: Wounded Lions and Changing Interpersonal Relationship Dynamics", which addresses connections between male attitudes, perceptions and life experiences and the prevalence of domestic violence. The report will be used to inform national law reform efforts and the research initiative will be expanded to encompass comparable reports for Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Antigua.

13. A number of initiatives have been directed towards strengthening integrated and coordinated responses in anti-violence work. In the Pacific, UNIFEM collaborated with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to conduct a regional workshop on strengthening partnerships to eliminate violence against women. The meeting brought Governments, civil society organizations, regional inter-governmental organizations and international development organizations together to explore and propose recommendations for enhancing government implementation of commitments and to establish stronger and more effective partnerships. UNIFEM has also been engaged in the development of the Moroccan National Strategy to combat gender-based violence in partnership with governmental and civil society representatives, UNDP, UNFPA and bilateral donors.

IV. *Not a Minute More* — reporting on progress in ending violence against women

14. Beginning in 2002 and culminating in 2003, UNIFEM conducted an assessment of progress made in eliminating violence against women, which has been published by the Fund under the title *Not a Minute More*. The assessment draws on the Fund's own global and subregional scans of the work that has been undertaken to end violence, as well as recent studies and analysis generated by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, WHO, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Council of Europe, the International Centre for Research on Women, the United Nations International Training and Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and many other organizations.

15. *Not a Minute More* highlights a series of notable achievements over the past several decades. In countries in every region, the silence that has surrounded this issue has been broken and awareness has been raised about the critical need for change. New legislation has criminalized many forms of violence against women. National and regional action plans to combat violence against women have been adopted. Research initiatives have begun to map out the forms and extent of violence and assess its impact on and costs to individual women and to society as a whole. *Not a Minute More* stresses that the progress that has been made towards ending violence rests on the work of three decades of advocacy, research, networking and awareness-raising largely undertaken by activists for women's rights. Much of the forward movement has been propelled by international and regional standards and policy recommendations, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The global recognition that violence against women is a violation of women's human rights is perhaps the most significant achievement of recent decades and has stimulated Governments from every region to commit themselves formally to eradicating such violence. However, *Not a Minute More* also identifies critical obstacles and roadblocks that are limiting the reach and effectiveness of those initiatives. There is recurring failure to implement new laws, policies and plans effectively and the work to eliminate violence against women is chronically underfunded and relies excessively on the unpaid labour of women's NGOs. Above all there is the problem of the pervasive influence of gender discrimination and inequality, which has hampered progress every step of the way.

16. *Not a Minute More* underlines that gender inequality fuels violence against women and that the power imbalances it creates are not easily rectified. To take the work to eliminate such violence to the next level, enhanced collaboration and partnerships are essential — no one Government, international body or civil society organization can have an effective impact in isolation. Among recommendations targeted for future action in the assessment are: improved data collection and research; systematized training for all sectors of the justice system; further development and expansion of prevention strategies and public awareness campaigns; greater focus on men's involvement and responsibility; support for community-based initiatives; and broad support for measures to further women's economic and political empowerment. Finally, in the light of the finding that the resources which have been made available for the work to eliminate violence against women are vastly inadequate, a new infusion of resources from Governments, the international community and the private sector is critically needed.

V. Conclusion

17. New initiatives to combat violence against women have produced important results in all countries and all regions of the world and the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women has played a key role in stimulating many of those innovations. However, as recent assessments have clearly indicated, the scale and depth of the pandemic urgently requires that the work on violence against women become a fundamental component of other mainstream efforts. In many areas that integration is already being pursued. Considerations of the role played by violence in fuelling the spread of HIV/AIDS are being built into the work conducted by UNIFEM, WHO and other United Nations agencies. Moreover, there is greater recognition that violence against women during peacetime is connected along a continuum with violence in times of conflict and post-conflict and that efforts must be made to address it properly in all of those contexts. At its forty-third session, the Fund's Consultative Committee recommended that consideration be given to expanding the Trust Fund's scope to encompass such broader and more integrated approaches.

18. In the light of those challenges, there is a pressing need for greater coordination within the United Nations system in supporting the work to end violence against women and, ultimately, for a wide range of agencies to adopt and expand upon the initiatives and successes that have been achieved to date. It is also clear that, beyond efforts possible within the United Nations system, a fundamental change in the levels of violence experienced by women around the world will not be possible until Member States themselves take on the role of mainstreaming and upscaling anti-violence initiatives in a more consistent and systematic fashion. The Trust Fund's Inter-Agency Project Appraisal Committee will be considering those issues in 2004 at an intersessional meeting to ensure that Trust Fund strategies will continue to respond in the most productive ways to the demands and opportunities presented by that work.